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FM AMEMBASSY TOKYO
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7519
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC PRIORITY
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RUEATRS/DEPT OF TREASURY WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
RUYNAAAC/COMNAVFORJAPAN YOKOSUKA JA PRIORITY
RHHMUNA/HQ USPACOM HONOLULU HI PRIORITY
RHHMHBA/COMPACFLT PEARL HARBOR HI//N541// PRIORITY
RHMFIUU/HQ PACAF HICKAM AFB HI//CC/PA// PRIORITY
RUHBANB/OKINAWA FLD OFC US FORCES JAPAN CP BUTLER JA PRIORITY
RHMFIUU/USFJ PRIORITY
INFO RUEHFK/AMCONSUL FUKUOKA 0061
RUEHNH/AMCONSUL NAHA 2420
RUEHNAG/AMCONSUL NAGOYA 8151
RUEHKSO/AMCONSUL SAPPORO 0636
RUEHOK/AMCONSUL OSAKA KOBE 3803
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 5529
RUEHMO/AMEMBASSY MOSCOW 2540
RUEHUL/AMEMBASSY SEOUL 1524
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 1811
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SIPDIS

STATE FOR I/RF, PA/PR/FPC/W, IIP/G/EA, EAP/PD, R/MR,
EAP/J, EAP/P, PM;
USTR FOR PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE;
TREASURY FOR OASIA/IMI;
SECDEF FOR OASD/PA;
CP BUTLER OKINAWA FOR AREA FIELD OFFICE;
PACOM HONOLULU FOR PUBLIC DIPLOMACY ADVISOR

E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: TOKYO MEDIA REACTION - USS GEORGE WASHINGTON
DEPLOYMENT TO JAPAN AND NORTH KOREA

1. LEAD STORIES: Most Friday morning papers gave top play to the results of their respective nationwide opinion polls on public support for the Aso cabinet, which was launched on Wednesday.

2. "Can George Washington Be Fortress of Peace?" The liberal Asahi editorialized (9/26): "...The deployment means more than a switch from an old carrier to a new one. While the U.S. Navy operates throughout the world, Yokosuka is the only overseas homeport for a U.S. carrier. Yokosuka is a symbol of the U.S.-Japan alliance due to the fact that it allows the Navy to cover an area ranging from the Pacific to the Arabian Sea.... Ambassador Schieffer said in the welcoming ceremony that the U.S. has no alliance more important than the one it has with Japan.... The deployment of a new aircraft carrier, which will increase the U.S. military's deterrent power, will contribute to the security of Japan.... However, the GOJ should receive more information from the U.S. military concerning its activities based from Japan.... More importantly, safety measures for nuclear-powered ships should be taken."

3. "U.S. and Japanese Governments Need to Take Thorough Safety Measures" The liberal Mainichi stated in an editorial (9/26): "...A minor incident or accident aboard a nuclear-powered vessel could lead to a serious incident involving local residents. The U.S. and Japanese governments need to establish a robust system to prevent and prepare for a possible accident by reflecting on the recent fire aboard the USS George Washington.... It is not sufficient for Japan to depend only on information from the U.S. military when an

accident happens or is suspected to have happened. The Japanese government should establish new arrangements with the U.S., including onsite inspections of U.S. vessels."

¶4. "Deployment to Contribute to Stability in Asia" The moderate Yomiuri editorialized (9/26): "The deployment is expected to contribute not only to the defense of Japan but also to peace and stability in the entire Asia-Pacific region.... At the same time, thorough safety measures for a nuclear-powered aircraft carrier need to be taken. The GOJ needs to continue to call on the U.S. to pay close attention to the safety of the carrier in order to remove local concerns.... It is important for the U.S. and Japan to continue their efforts to build mutual confidence through joint drills and candid exchanges of opinion."

¶5. "Concerns About Homeporting" The liberal Tokyo Shimbun insisted in an editorial (9/26): "...Although the U.S. has guaranteed the safety of the carrier, safety control exercised only by the U.S. will not remove local anxieties. The GOJ's active commitment is indispensable to prevent an accident.... While a welcoming ceremony was held at the base, civic groups carried out protests, displaying a banner reading 'We don't need a nuclear-powered carrier.' This demonstrates how deep their concern about a 'floating nuclear reactor' is. The U.S. and Japanese governments should take this seriously.... It will not do to have

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the Japanese people feel anxious because of the U.S.-Japan alliance. The GOJ's efforts are insufficient. It should call on the U.S. to release more information and allow it to verify ships' safety."

¶6. "North Korea's Brinkmanship Unacceptable" The conservative Sankei editorialized (9/26): "...Although North Korea claims that it is taking 'countermeasures' in response to the U.S. delay in delisting it as a state sponsor of terrorism, this is nothing more than sophistry. Delisting was originally set to be carried out in return for Pyongyang's complete and correct declaration of its nuclear programs, and verification of the declaration is required to ensure the accuracy of the declaration.... It is important that the other five members of the six-party talks, including the U.S. and Japan, not compromise their principles.... If North Korea goes back on its agreements, the suspension of energy assistance will be unavoidable."

SCHIEFFER